



FACT SHEET: Background on Gun Violence and Mental Health in America

Gun Violence Is a Serious Problem in the United States

Nearly 12,000 Americans are murdered with guns every year and Americans are 20 times as likely to be murdered with guns in the United States as are people in other developed countries. [Everytown, [9/28/15](#)]

- Each day, an average of 88 Americans are killed by a gun, including 7 children and teens. [Everytown, [9/28/15](#)]
- Every 36 hours in this country, unintentional shootings involving children are reported in the press. [Everytown, [9/28/15](#)]
- Every month in the U.S., an average of 52 women are shot and killed by their intimate partners. [Everytown, [9/28/15](#)]

Gun Violence Has Tremendous Social and Economic Costs

- After car crashes, firearm injury is the leading cause of death. [Annals of Internal Medicine, [6/17/14](#)]
- There are approximately 88 gun deaths per day, the equivalent of “a good-sized airplane crash every three days.” [Washington Post, [4/10/14](#); Annals of Internal Medicine, [6/17/14](#)]
- There are 32,000 deaths and 74,000 injuries caused by guns in the U.S. every year. This includes about “11,000 homicides, 19,000 suicides, and more than 2,000 fatal accidents involving guns” each year. [Washington Post, [4/10/14](#); Annals of Internal Medicine, [6/17/14](#)]
- For every one time that someone uses a gun for self-defense, there are “four accidental shootings, seven criminal assaults or homicides and 11 attempted or completed suicides.” [Washington Post, [4/10/14](#)]
- According to the CDC, the work-loss, rehabilitation, and emotional trauma caused by firearms costs over \$60 billion per year. [PBS, [3/12/13](#)]

Background Checks Keep Guns Out of the Hands of Criminals and the Mentally Ill

Since 1998, background checks have prevented about 2.4 million gun sales to prohibited purchasers. [CAP, [2/15](#); Mayors Against Illegal Guns, [9/28/15](#)]

- 17 states and the District of Columbia require background checks for the sale of all handguns. [CAP, [2/15](#)]
- State background check requirements for all handgun sales have prevented 46 percent more women from being shot and killed by their intimate partners; 48 percent more law enforcement officer deaths by firearms; and 48 percent more gun suicides. [CAP, [2/15](#)]

Millions of Americans Need Treatment for Mental Illness

Most Americans with a mental illness will never commit a violent crime, but sometimes people fall through the cracks. Nearly 44 million adults experience mental illness in a given year; approximately 1 in 5 adult Americans. Nearly 13.6 million American adults live with a severe mental illness. [NIH, [11/14](#); NIH, [11/14](#)]

- Approximately 8.4 million adults have co-occurring mental health and addiction disorders. [HHS, [12/13](#)]
- Serious mental illness costs America more than \$193 billion in lost earnings every year. [NAMI]

Nearly 60 percent of adults and nearly half of youth who have a mental illness didn't receive mental health services in the previous year. [HHS, [12/13](#); NIH]

An Overwhelming Majority of Americans, Including Gun Owners, Support Requiring Background Checks For All Gun Buyers

- A recent Quinnipiac poll found that 93% of those surveyed support “requiring background checks for all gun buyers”. [Quinnipiac, [9/28/15](#)]
- Recent surveys by Pew and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health found that approximately 85 percent of gun owners support universal background checks. [Washington Post, [10/8/15](#); Johns Hopkins, [6/3/15](#)]
- A recent Pew poll also found that 85% percent of those surveyed support background checks for gun show and private sales. [Pew, [8/12/15](#)]
 - 79% of Republicans support background checks for gun show and private sales.
- A recent CBS News poll found that 81% of Republicans, 93% of Democrats, and 89% of Independents support background checks for all buyers. [CBS News, [8/4/15](#)]

A large majority of Americans support strong gun laws that include universal background checks to prevent the mentally ill from buying firearms.

- In a recent Pew Poll, 79% of those surveyed, including 81% of Republicans and 84% of those with guns in their households, support laws to prevent the mentally ill from buying firearms. [Pew, [8/12/15](#)]